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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:
~~Claims~~

5   1.   A method of manipulating electronically generated messages belonging to at least 2 of the following messages types: e-mail, fax, video, pager, SMS, voice mail; comprising the step of handling the electronically generated messages using a single messaging application.

10   2.   The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 1 wherein the single messaging application handles certain attributes of messages, these attributes being shared by all of the message types.

     3.   The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 2
15   wherein the single messaging application invokes or applies certain operations to the attributes of the messages, these operations being applicable to all of the message types which are capable of being manipulated by the messaging application.

20   4.   The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 3 wherein the messaging application interfaces with one or more databases of loadable software code modules relating to message type specific attributes and/or operations.

25   5.   The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 4, wherein a new messaging type can be dynamically added to a system whilst the system is fully operational by adding new loadable software code modules to one or more databases.

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6.   The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 3 wherein all user interface code is accessed through a database using loadable software code modules.

5   7.   A software program for manipulating messages of a given type, comprising loadable software code modules capable of interfacing with a single messaging application, the loadable software code modules relating to message type specific attributes and/or operations and the single messaging application being operable to manipulate electronically generated messages 10 belonging to at least 2 of the following messages types: e-mail, fax, video, pager, SMS and voice mail.

8.   The software program as claimed in Claim 7 wherein the software program is a dynamically loadable plug-in to the messaging application.

15   9.   The software program as claimed in Claim 7 wherein each loadable software code module is individually capable of enabling the execution of one or more tasks from the following list of tasks:

(a)   Reporting to the messaging application the functional capabilities 20   of one or more loadable software code modules;

(b)   Supplying text for on-screen menus;

(c)   Creating, and/or editing and/or displaying messages;

(d)   Converting messages to be sent by the application to a protocol and format required by an external recipient and the conversion of 25   messages received by the application to a protocol and format required by the messaging application.

10.   The software program as claimed in Claim 9 wherein the loadable software code is object oriented code which creates real objects to execute a task.

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11. A software program messaging application capable of manipulating electronically generated messages belonging to at least 2 of the following messages types: e-mail, fax, video, pager, SMS, and voice mail.

5   12. A computer operating system comprising a single messaging application operable to handle at least 2 of the following messages types: e-mail, fax, video, pager, SMS, and voice mail.

13. An operating system operable to participate in the performance of any
10   preceding method claim when used in conjunction with a software program defined in Claims 7 to 10.

14. A method of manipulating electronically generated messages using a messaging application, wherein the messaging application interfaces with
15   several databases, each with loadable software code modules, each database individually providing code modules relevant to the execution of one or more tasks from the following list of tasks:

 (a) Reporting to the messaging application the functional capabilities of one or more loadable software code modules;

20   (b) Supplying text for on-screen menus;

 (c) Creating, and/or editing and/or displaying messages;

 (d) Converting messages to be sent by the application to a protocol and format required by an external recipient and the conversion of messages received by the application to a protocol and format
25   required by the messaging application.

15. The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 14, wherein appropriate software code modules are loaded only when required by the messaging application.

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16. The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 14 wherein the messaging application can handle at least 2 of the following messages types: e-mail, fax, video, pager, SMS, voice mail.

5   17. The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 16 wherein code to manipulate each message type is accessed using several databases, each with loadable software code modules, each database individually providing code modules relevant to the execution of one or more tasks from the list of tasks defined in Claim 14.

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18. The method of manipulating electronically generated messages as in Claim 17 wherein the application can be enhanced to manipulate a new messaging type without re-compilation, by adding loadable software code modules to one or more databases with which the application can interface, each database
15 providing code modules relevant to the execution of one or more of the tasks defined in Claim 14.

19. A software program for manipulating messages of a given type, comprising one or more databases capable of interfacing with a single messaging
20 application, the one or more databases providing registered information about installed loadable software code modules relating to message type specific attributes and/or operations, each database individually providing code modules relevant to the execution of one or more of the tasks defined in Claim 14.

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20. The software program as claimed in Claim 19 being a dynamically loadable plug-in to the messaging application.

21. The software program as claimed in Claim 20 wherein the loadable software
30 code is object oriented code which creates real objects to execute a task.

22. An electronic communications apparatus programmed to perform the method of any of Claims 1 – 6, or 14 - 18,

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23. An electronic communications apparatus programmed with the software of any of claims 7 - 13, or 19 – 21.

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